Breaking News

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County Solar Planning Continues for Rural Communities

Today the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed an extension of the moratorium on commercial solar energy projects in order for the County to complete the planning process of adding a renewable energy component to the General Plan. While the County has begun to make headway, the County needs another 3 to 6 months to update the development code.

The need for proper planning creates certainty for solar development in this county. Delaying development during the planning process protects businesses and developers from investing time and money into a project that potentially could then be zoned against the new development codes. Those companies who have already submitted completed applications to Land Use Services will not be affected by the delay.

Proper planning will also help labor. When solar projects are proposed in neighborhoods, they open themselves up to litigation from communities that could challenge the projects. By addressing this issue over the next six months with proper planning, we will be able to protect our residents from solar developments in their backyards. At the same time, we will heighten certainty for solar industry by better defining our development codes to include renewable energy projects.

"Adding a renewable energy component to the County's General Plan is crucial. The current plan is nearly silent on renewable energy and the development code permits solar projects to back up against residential areas in the unincorporated parts of the County. We need the next three to six months to properly plan for the impact these solar projects have on the rural communities of our county. We will work diligently to complete

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this process in a timely manner. Proper planning will provide protections for all," stated Supervisor Ramos.

First District Supervisor Robert Lovingood said solar projects already approved and in the pipeline will not be affected by the extension. "I want to be clear, San Bernardino County welcomes renewable energy project applications," Lovingood said. "This extension is a balanced approach that will enable the county to protect property owners and set fair ground rules that solar developers can live with."

The County will continue its planning process for renewable energy in the unincorporated areas. It is expected for this process to be finished in the next three to six months.

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